THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) to (d) Since cancer involves a Multi Model approach (Surgery/ Chemotherapy/Radiodiagnosis), it is generally prolonged and require considerable expenses on the part of the provider of cancer care service. Moreover due to the high cost of equipment and instruments used in diagnosis and treatment of cancer, the cost of cancer management is costly.

However, it may be noted that in Government hospitals/medical colleges/Government supported Regional Cancer Centres, a large number of patients are either being treated free of cost or at a nominal charges for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures involved in cancer treatment as compared to the private or corporate hospitals. The Chemotherapy drugs for treatment of cancer are usually expensive. Nevertheless, the cheaper Chemotherapy drugs or combinations are given as alternative, which may be almost equally effective.

(e) At present cancer is the 8th leading cause of death and therefore an important specific disease entity in India. As per the mortality statistics of cause of death (1987) by Registrar General of India under the scheme of Medical Certification of causes of death, cancer accounted for 3.5% of all deaths. It is estimated that cancer deaths may be 3 lakhs annually.

Enforcing Drug Control

694. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item, "Enforce strict Drug Controls; Experts" appearing in the Newsline dated 1st July, 2000;

(b) if so, the reaction thereto; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to address the

serious problems prevailing in the Indian pharmaceutical market, as highlighted in the aforesaid news-item?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Under the provisions of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules thereunder, the enforcement of quality control of Drugs and Pharmaceuticals is regulated by State Licensing Authorities through a system of licensing. The Drugs Control Officers draw samples from manufacturers, traders etc. and get their Quality validated through their Government testing laboratories. The Act & Rules provide adequate safeguards to check sale of spurious drugs and to maintain quality standards.

Since speedy testing of drugs plays an important role in unearthing detecting drugs of questionable quality, Govt. of India has advised the State Governments from time to time to strengthen and augment their infrastructure testing facilities in terms of equipments and manpower.

Besides various policy directions, the Central Government is also providing assistance to State Governments to augment testing facilities and other related information system.

Steps taken by the Govt. to ensure manufacture of Quality drugs/medicines in the country include stipulating GMPs as a satisfactory requirement under the Act, making pharmacopocial standards more stringent, advising States to constitute/reactive State Drug Advisory Committee, surveillance of suspected dealers selling drugs of doubtful quality, augmenting enforcement staff and drug testing facilities in the States. All retail pharmacies are required to appoint only registered pharmacists recognised under the Pharmacy Act.